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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 002437

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WHA FOR A/S SHANNON, DAS DUDDY, DMCCARTHY
WHA/BSC FOR BARNES, FRIEDMAN, MOSS
NEA/IR FOR HWOOSTER
MADRID FOR DCM LLORENS
S/CT FOR ARNOLD SIERRA
NSC FOR JOSE CARDENAS
FBI FOR CTD IRAN-HIZBALLAH UNIT AND OIO AMERICAS UNIT

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TAGS: PTER KJUS PREL PGOV AR FBI

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON AMIA INDICTMENTS

REF: A. BUENOS AIRES 2411

1B. BUENOS AIRES 2092
1C. BUENOS AIRES 1612

Classified By: Charge d'affaires Michael Matera for reasons
1.4(b)and(d)

11. (C) Summary: Local press coverage of the October 25 release of the AMIA Prosecutors' report remains relatively low-key. The Iranian Mission here has rejected the Prosecutors' findings, dismissed the report as the work of the CIA and Mossad, and cautioned Argentine officials not to repeat the mistakes of the past, referring to the international capture notices issued by the previous judge in the case, Jose Galeano. A demonstration in support of Iran, organized by various leftist piquetero groups and groups associated with an Iranian-supported mosque, is scheduled for 2:00PM today in front of the Iranian Mission. AMIA Prosecutor Nisman told the CDA that he expects the responsible judge in this case, Canicoba Corral, to make his decision and issue arrest warrants in three to four weeks. The GOA has not made any public statements regarding the report. The silence emanating from the Casa Rosada is a clear indication that it prefers to let this issue take its natural course and avoid direct confrontation at this time with Iran. Embassy does not anticipate the government trying to influence one way or the other the judge's issuance of the arrest warrants. CDA and Embassy Officers are prepared to consult with senior Foreign Ministry and Casa Rosada officials and to discuss ways in which the USG and others in the international community can support the GOA, once the arrest warrants are issued. Embassy is translating the Prosecutors' report summary and will forward it soonest. End Summary.

12. (U) The AMIA story, 36 hours after the release of the Prosecutors' indictments, is not receiving significant attention, pushed off the front pages for the most part by coverage of a controversial provincial election in Misiones and the headline in Pagina 12 -- the left-leaning, pro-government daily -- proclaiming that the U.S. and Latin America are farther apart than ever with the U.S. administration's decision to go forward with the construction of fences on the Mexican-U.S. border.

¶3. (U) Most of the AMIA coverage on October 27 was focused on Iran's response, both here in Buenos Aires and coming out of Tehran. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammed Ali Hosseini is stated to have rejected the claims made in the report and cautioning Argentine officials to "avoid past mistakes and make reasonable and accurate documentation the basis of any opinion." This latter admonition in reference to the investigation and international capture notices issued by the former AMIA investigating judge Juan Jose Galeano (ref. C). The Iranian Charge d'affaires in Buenos Aires, Mohsen Baharvand, is quoted as stating that the prosecutors' accusations are based on reports from the CIA and Mossad.

¶4. (U) The GOA has remained largely silent on the issuance and content of the report. Unnamed Foreign Ministry sources are reported as stating the report's release is an important step but the government remains cautious and would not be changing its diplomatic relations, which remain at a low level. The two major organizations representing the Argentine Jewish community AMIA and DAIA have welcomed the report's release and stated they will be asking the government to call for international sanctions against Iran.

¶5. (U) In comments to the press, the judge in the case, Rodolfo Canicoba Corral, has admitted the complexity of bringing to justice those implicated in the case, noting the failure of the international capture notices emitted by his predecessor and the complete lack of cooperation from the Iranian government.

¶6. (C) Comment: AMIA prosecutor Alberto Nisman told the CDA on October 26 that he had spoken with Judge Canicoba Corral and that the judge told him he expected to make his decision within three-to-four weeks. Nisman said he didn't think the judge would delay much longer given the tremendous attention and pressure in the case. This time-frame would appear reasonable given the length (800 pages) and complexity of the report. The GOA's silence highlights its concerns about overly antagonizing the Iranians. Embassy has no indications at this time, however, that the government will try to delay, or influence Canicoba Corral's deliberations. This posture is consistent with the GOA's approach to the case over the last year. The Casa Rosada has not backed away from its commitment to see this case through, but is content to let the judicial process proceed on its own. CDA and Embassy Officers are prepared to consult with senior Foreign Ministry and Casa Rosada officials on ways in which the USG and others in the international community can support the GOA's efforts. Embassy has spoken to colleagues in the Israeli Embassy -- which has issued its own statement October 26 in support of the report -- and has been approached by the British and Canadians seeking our take on events. In all these meetings, we expressed our hope that their respective governments could publicly support the efforts of the AMIA prosecutor and GOA and noted that we would likely be consulting with them on further steps to take once the arrest warrants are issued.

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